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ABSTRACT

The school desegregation movement grew out of a concern for educational equity, which has a basis in constitutional/judicial principles, psychological concerns (the belief that racial isolation is psychologically damaging to the disadvantaged), and black nationalism (manifested in a concern for developing students' self-esteem). Cultural pluralism, humanistic education, and compensatory education emerged as responses to the interest in providing equal education. In the early seventies, emphasis on academic achievement due to the accountability movement swept aside interest in the more idealistic goals of social integration and cultural pluralism. The current disparity in economic status among minorities and whites and discouraging developments in school desegregation programs indicate a bleak picture for desegregation and suggest a future drift away from concern with social integration. Past and current developments in desegregation point to the following possible future directions: 1) less mandatory action for racial integration; 2) continued use of magnet programs; 3) divisiveness resulting from block grants; 4) education increasingly oriented to a class segmented world of work; 5) increased use of computer technology in education; 6) increased private sector responsibility for vocational education; and 7) a possible return to the 1954 desegregation agenda where educational equity meant equal access to facilities and resources rather than social integration. (Author/MJL)

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THE GHOST OF DESEGREGATION: AN AGENDA FOR THE 80'S

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It is impossible for mere researchers to predict the future directions that the proponents of educational equity might take in the 80's but it would be instructive to examine the relationship between the perceived arena for social change and larger socio-economic conditions. The authors' have worked as providers of technical assistance for seven years through the Region IX Desegregation Assistance Center and as ethnographic researchers on staff development needs in desegregating schools for four years funded by the National Institute of Education. We have shared dreams and nightmares of those struggling to secure educational equity. In our most recent troubled sleep we have been visited by the ghosts of desegregation past, present, and future. Here is what they have told us.

The Ghost of Desegregation Past

Oh Researchers! Don't you remember the impetus for the desegregation movement was the exclusion of blacks from many aspects of everyday life in a white society. The judicial emphasis of equity issue was ENTRY. The Brown decision set the tone of the vast social experiment of school integration by stating that constitutional rights were guaranteed equal access to educational opportunities. The interpretation of this principle was that it was injurious to blacks to be separate from the schooling experience of majority students. A philosophical leap was made from the constitutional issue of guaranteed access, (to equal resources) to the requirement of physical copresence. Racial isolation was not just likely to be concomitant with unequal distribution of resources, it was perceived to be psychologically damaging to the isolated minority. With an expanding economy the second major northward relocation of

blacks during World War II produced no economic competition for whites and certainly no social unrest. There was room enough for America to vilify Southern segregationists and demand the dismantling of the dual educational system of the south.

In the sixties educational theory had caught up to the psychologistic interpretation of the Brown decision and expanded the notion of psychological damage among the disadvantaged. Black nationalism, pasteurized through the burgeoning white liberal educational development industry emerged as a concern for ensuring students' self-concept and self-esteem. The tenets of cultural pluralism began to filter down to teacher education and the classroom, aided by key new legal requirements that curriculum materials (and even television commercials) reflect racial diversity. Humanistic education seemed a logical progression toward guaranteeing the rights of students to be freed from the chains of standardized curriculum. Research complimented the desirability of this approach by maintaining that there were distinct learning styles that were presumably culturally specific. Since the climate was favorable to the notion that cultures were sacred and must be preserved, many educators were willing to listen to the Labovs who insisted that indeed cultures were relative and that it was improper to be imperialistic about majority culture. This belief system was built in direct response to the pressure of black nationalism (Take a Panther to Dinner) and as a defense against the Jenses of the world who would foreclose on the possibility of the intrinsic equality of the races.

At the same time there was an alarming recognition that class differences were largely responsible for differences in academic achievement and that compensatory education would be required to make the mixing of race and class viable in the classroom. Great society money was called upon in ever expanding

measure to alleviate the disadvantages of school districts having to finance the needs of students who would never have remained in school in the previous decade.

At some point in the early seventies the momentum of the legal gains of 1954 and 1964 were caught in the countervailing forces of two undeniable trends: The promise of the myriad lawsuits to desegregate the schools of most major cities were rotting on the vine by effective legal delays or withering in token compliance. Second, the attention of the school districts and the minority community began to question the educational attainment of students in desegregated as well as segregated settings. As the accountability movement gained sway over the humanistic movement "psychological fairness" was devalued in favor of basic skills, and minimum competencies. In many ways the fate of Head Start/ Follow Through Evaluations mirrors the change in the relationship between politics and public education.

As House (1979) tellingly portrays the history of the Evaluation, the initial attempts to limit the outcome measures of this social experiment to cognitive tests was rebuffed by strenuous oppositions by sponsors of the programs and minority parents whose participation was part of the original design of the program. Despite the problems created for social scientists, the attempt was made to examine a variety of other criteria (such as the efficacy of parent involvement and non-academic social growth of students) for assessing the effectiveness of alternative program types. By 1973 the Office of Education had stepped in over the protest of the sponsors and

(t)he scope of the evaluation was drastically reduced to a few standardized outcome measures and the whole evaluation was transferred from a political to a technical enterprise.¹

Eventually it was determined that a best model would have to be determined despite the fact that the high variation within program types strongly mitigated against the validity of such a conclusion.

In retrospect, the least powerful members of the program--the minorities, the parents, and the teachers--were effectively excluded from the evaluation.²

How was the history of the Follow Up evaluations instructive for understanding the fate of desegregation? First, the force of the civil rights movement waned as desegregation became a fait d'accompli and entered the jurisdiction of the bureaucratic ministrings of the very institutions that were "guilty" of producing segregatory policy. Educators and parents alike became more concerned with demonstrably educational (read achievement) gains rather than the more idealistic goals of social integration and cultural pluralism. The conventional wisdom came to accept that open education was dangerously eroding the preparation of students--especially minority children. (In fact the research suggests that there is no difference between the academic achievement of open ed and traditional classrooms by social class. McPartland & Epstein, 1975) Open education (and humanistic precepts such as multicultural education) were rejected as idealistic errors made to accommodate low achievers (read minorities) at the expense of high achievers. In fact one of the few solid findings of the research has been that minority achievement improves and white achievement does not suffer. Yet the impact of desegregation research in schools was weakened by the defensive position of researchers who continued to argue for or against the arguments of Coleman and Armor.

The futility of secondary analyses of Coleman and Jencks and Armor's data and subsequent small scale studies was that the original conclusions had become imbedded in the conventional wisdom (vis. that "social class not race predicted school success," that "schools did not make a difference" and that "whites will immediately flee from desegregated schools"). Policymakers, seeking clear

answers from social scientists, discovered that desegregation research findings varied dramatically depending on the presuppositions or statistical manipulations of the researchers. Local policymakers were able to pick a set of social scientists with the "right" expert advice for the court cases, plan development and/or evaluation.

As O'Neill pointed out in the '60's, social scientists are taught that their role is to be a prophet or a doctor to society, but in reality they function as police or as prostitutes.³ Thus, just as Abt Associates pronounced basic skills Follow Through programs the winners after protesting that such a decision was statistically unwarranted (so as not to lose the contract) social scientists were used as prostitutes by policymakers.

The Ghost of Desegregation Present

I wish to speak to you of a crisis of faith. As a social movement desegregation had a legalistic claim (guarantees of constitutional rights), a constituency (minorities with something to gain, liberal whites with a reformist activism), an ideology (pluralism) and a strategy (court action and direct confrontation). The legalistic claim had the acceptance and the "teeth" of the Civil Rights Legislation of 1964. The constituency and the educational establishment shared an ideology which would provide an agenda of instructional methods and social relations in the classroom, a redesign of curriculum and new criteria for evaluating educational effectiveness and student performance.

There is an incontrovertible irony when one examines the gains of blacks in reaching the promised land of the economic parity by means of the ferry of desegregated education: On the one hand the poorest fifth of the nation (predominantly black and Mexican American) received 5.4% of the national income

in 1974--virtually unchanged from the figures for 1947⁴ --despite the transfer payments which burgeoned during the intervening time. Blacks earn only 60% of the average national income, part of the reason is that half of all blacks live in the south where incomes are lower in general. Married black couples in New York earn 93% of that of white couples.⁵ While the south was desegregated by mandate it would not be an exaggeration to claim that by and large the major urban areas of the north have maintained segregated schools, and that resegregation has been more problematic outside the deep south. Thus, the relationship between desegregation and upward economic mobility is tenuous.

The moral impetus and the legal impetus for desegregation are already spent in this society. If the faith in education as the guarantor of political pluralism and economic democracy were to be toppled, then desegregation would truly become a dead issue.

Come with me and I will show you how economic and social trends are hastening the wake.

Look at the Withering of the Public School System

Many have pointed to the impending crisis for public schools. Here are a few of the disturbing incidents which suggest the direction of the crisis.

1. One of the districts you studied after 15 years of legal maneuvering to avoid desegregating, set up four magnets. They announce that if any more magnets are to developed (including a proposal from teachers at one school for a science magnet) that the district could not provide funds above the Average Daily Attendance categorical allotments.

2. The St. Louis schools have offered what could be described as bribes, offering college tuition rebates to whites who are willing to attend inner city schools.

3. The concept of school vouchers in California is denounced by blacks and the teachers union but is supported by the Hispanic community which views it as a solution to the problem of assuring acceptable neighborhood bilingual schools.

4. In another school district you studied their response to the problem of getting students to pass the minimum competency tests was to continue to retest the students on the same tests (after they received corrected answer sheets) until they pass. Incidentally, the math minimum competence for high school graduation did not test beyond the ability to do long division.

5. In many of the districts served by the Desegregation Assistance Center most of the ESSA monies were used for salaries. As former ESSA programs become part of block grants these personnel are subject to lay off and the educational "assets" of the desegregation programs will evaporate with them.

The Ghost of Desegregation Future

Come with me and I will show you in my crystal ball scenes to be which have their seeds now.

I see Less Mandatory Remediation for Racial Isolation

Given the clear direction set by the Justice Department in dealing with the Chicago schools it is not difficult to predict that judicial muscle will not be put to use in the service of guaranteeing the same standards of plan acceptability as were used in the past. The Justice Department no longer has funds nor the will to prosecute school districts--and that is the bottom line.

Although no reinterpretation of the Brown decision is likely the courts appear increasingly willing to settle for what might be termed "guaranteed compensatory initiatives" by districts to assure the minority community that

their racially isolated schools will be allocated additional resources. This has been the case by default in Dallas and Houston.

The most recent attack on desegregation overall has been the easy success of the 1982 anti-busing legislation in passing the Senate, which is certain to erode support for equity programs in Congress.

I See Continued Use of Magnet Programs

A perennial favorite of districts, magnet programs have proved effective at providing the image and accountability of voluntary compliance and good faith while requiring minimal disruption within the community and the educational agency. Good magnet programs have been implemented to raise the quality of academic offerings; many bad programs which use a "strand" or "minimagnet" approach maintain segregation at the classroom level while satisfying ethnic balance at the building level. Especially noteworthy from the educational consumer's standpoint are the "back to basics" magnet programs which quite often present the same wine in the same bottles.

Yet magnet programs offer many of the incentives that will convince white parents (and minorities, who still are the majority in parochial schools) to keep their children in the public schools.

I See How The Block Grant Concept Will Ensure Devisiveness

With the responsibility of distributing monies to categorical programs now going to the states, the infighting and dealing among the various interest groups (basic skills, desegregation, sex equity, bilingual education, and special education) will be unavoidable. Title I funding had many favorable effects as it gave districts financial flexibility to use their diminishing resources to better meet their administrative and educational planning needs. For example, in several districts you were told that there had not been an

evaluation department or staff responsible exclusively for teacher improvement at the elementary level until ESSA funds made this possible. It is clear that as districts cut back personnel to deal with diminished finances service delivery will suffer.

I see teachers remaining in control of certain types of offerings that constitute desegregated education

It is highly unlikely that there will be anything on the horizon to change the condition you have observed throughout the Western region--there is little control over the implementation of programs from the site administrators or central office. Teachers remain free to group, to counsel, to refer, to address or ignore ethnicity, and to seek or not seek parental commitment to the school. Basic skills orientations appear to be popular with large segments of the community so the concept (regardless of the content) will be a more compelling orientation for teachers than humanistic education which emphasizes pluralistic approaches to learning.

I see education adapting to an increasingly class segmented world of work

It is not within the scope of my crystal ball to add to the controversy over the relative importance of race vs. class in determining educational attainment. There are regional variations in income, racial, gender, age, region, and education. There is racism, sexism, and agism at work in hiring decisions. Now how is the educational community to react? While most would agree that pragmatic not idealistic goals are indicated, it is entirely problematic what constitutes pragmatic social action. In the short term there may be merit in making education responsive to existing occupational slots in the current economy. But in the long term, the country needs an adaptable labor force that can move laterally as the labor markets shift and as individuals'

needs for job satisfaction evolve. The latter is clearly a priority for management, as productivity is directly related to worker commitment.

Unfortunately it is this long range concern for educating students, from the elementary years on, to be able to pursue new knowledge and skills that will be ignored by the institutions which produce teachers and which administer school systems. It is this national priority which will be ignored by Washington, by State Departments of Education and by block grant applicants. What will persist is the class segmented work force which creates: (1) skilled jobs (industry trained) in industrial production for the disenfranchised and the recent immigrant populations from Southeast Asia and Latin American; (2) pink collar jobs and sales jobs in the service sector which do not lead to management careers. (The U.S. already has the highest ratio of sales clerks to goods sold of any nation.) (3) Professional jobs for independent contractors who service the major corporations with technologically or educationally/financially specialized consulting. It doesn't take an expert to figure that the public school system cannot hope to improve the success of minorities where training comes from the industry. Nor is access to the specialized professional jobs forthcoming unless teachers of science and technology can be lured from more lucrative compensation in industry. Current school finance cannot afford laboratory equipment, let alone the salaries to make teachers available.

Although there will probably never be the sort of boom in governmental financial support for science education as was motivated by the Sputnik gap the nation faces a crisis of sorts as it seeks to maintain technological superiority over the Japanese and the French in computer systems development. The National Science Foundation reports that the percentage of high school students taking at least one science course dropped from 59% in 1960 to 48% in 1977. There are only 10,000 physics teachers to cover this country's 17,000 school districts.⁶

As the push is on to reduce unemployment by tailoring training programs to the available jobs, and as Reagan seems charmed by the Pentagon's Rasputins' urgings that gaps once again be narrowed, minorities may be in a position to bargain for federally funded educational quality which leads to these science and technology oriented jobs.

Unfortunately there are already trends in American higher education which point to the unlikelyhood of these gains being made. As Sexton (1974) pointed out a definite pattern of social stratification by race in college attendance existed in the '70's with blacks and Hispanics attending colleges with far lower \$/student resources.⁷ This academic year (1981-82) higher tuitions and reduced student aid programs have become responsible for shifting first year enrollments: down 2% at private colleges and up 5.5% at two year community colleges. This trend suggests that fewer poor and minorities will have the opportunity to be schooled at the institutions which can provide high technology training. Felix Rohaytn has said that if Reagan is serious about building "enterprise zones" in blighted cities that

"inner city schools should be linked directly to any new programs for economic development . . . youth can be trained for the jobs being created."⁸

Both those who support an affirmative action policy to technical educational advancement and those whose concept of educational opportunity has turned from physical desegregation to educational quality would do well to press for assurances that the new job markets not be created as a dual tract system with minorities receiving the data processing jobs (jobs with no future but jobs nonetheless) rather than the far better paying systems design and management jobs.

I see the shifting of responsibility for vocational education to the private sector

While tricklenomics hands over responsibility for job readiness to the private sector there is no strong argument for business to underwrite the costs of preparing workers they don't need. There may be some hope on the horizon from the East. In addition to clamoring for industrial workers to sacrifice wages, the industrial giants show signs of being willing to accept not only robotics but the management methods which include workers in decision making which account for the dramatic dominance of the Japanese auto, electronics, and steel industries. The notion that a nonadversarial relationship between company and employees can benefit profits, and that company responsibility toward the security of the employees can maintain high worker productivity may filter down to the American job market. The main question remains how these techniques (if applied) would operate in an economy dominated by service industries rather than production.

The first signs of private sector involvement in schooling include banks donating to school system curriculum materials laced with pro-free market rhetoric, and, in one district we observed, a "futures" magnet program which features field trips to flight towers and microwave transmitters--and to McDonalds and Burger King (presaging the dual labor tracts?). Articles are beginning to appear which note that corporate involvement in the schools may carry a double-edged sword.

I see the important role of technology in education

Everywhere in our society we are being prepared for a (not too distant) futureworld in which human affairs will be processed through computer linkages. In education the reality is that the role of the teacher as we know it will

increasingly be passed on to the teaching machines. Already parents are assuming responsibility for educating their children on home computers. Will innercity and rural minority public schools and poor families be able to compete with this trend? Our research and experience points out that minority students who utilized the computer assisted instruction in several California schools were faced with many of the same learning distractions as are found in a regular classroom, i.e., poor supervision of home study, environmental conditions that de-emphasized education, teachers who were less than enthusiastic about working with students who were slow learners, etc. The Ghost wonders if the efforts to convert to electronic technology in education should go forth without examining the special application needs of poor and minority students.

On the positive side one hope for the goals of equality of access and outcome is the anonymity which is provided by computer interface. Information exchanges, testing, and interactive programs will be accomplished without the race or gender identifications which are known to play a part in teacher expectations. Thus, computers may to some extent provide some assurances of fairness in evaluating student performance.

In addition to altering the relative importance of expectation effects on minority students' performance, microcomputers will change the role of the teacher in managing learning activities. The academic learning time of students, which has been shown to be a critical variable in improving achievement, will be structured by computer programs. The teachers' role will shift to a monitoring function. It appears that the focus of equity issues will shift from emphasis on social integration to (1) insuring that software development incorporates multicultural sensitivity, both to learning styles and cultural content and (2) allocating appropriate resources to support the effort.

School Finance

Will the future described above be affordable for public schools? There is evidence that tuition tax credits and voucher programs are pointing the way for an exodus from the public school system. The new technology (microcomputers, interactive video, and videodiscs) also creates the possibility for new configurations for education other than public schools. For example, home instruction using teachers appearing on TV to provide instant feedback to interactive cable viewers has already been piloted in Japan. Projected enrollment drops have discouraged school administrators from purchasing the new technology. But one school district which bought 220 computers for its high school points out that the cost only amounted to \$7.50 per student over the next five years, pointing out also that such costs are roughly comparable to text book purchase.⁹ An indication of the rapid acceptance of computer instruction--despite the financial crunch--is that sales of educational software programs exceeded \$10 million last year and are expected to reach \$35 million this year.¹⁰

The Socio-Political Context

The future will require a return to the agenda of the 1954 desegregation ruling: to provide equal access to resources, facilities, etc. The prognosis does not appear as threatening to educational equity as might appear on the surface, but social integration is certain to be a casualty.

Could the Ghost of Desegregation Past have ever envisioned blacks rejecting the goal of desegregation? Would the debate in the mind of the Ghost of Desegregation Present about about white flight be settled once and for all by the increase in public school enrollment of 7000 students when mandatory busing was disallowed in Los Angeles?¹¹

The clearest indications are that nothing--in the form of a social movement or a political mandate from our conservative administration, or a judicial crusade--appears on the horizon to change the current drift away from the perceived need for social integration. Fragmentation of the society according to both race and class appears to be the accepted direction. Technology will play a role in accelerating and maintaining our segmented society.

Grass roots support for social integration will continue to wane as minorities reluctantly reject desegregation in favor of "quality" education in neighborhood schools. This phenomenon began about three years ago when some noted black educators, Derrick Bell and Ron Edmonds among them, argued for maintaining effective black schools. In testimony two weeks ago, Charles Willie, a noted black desegregation expert, supported the right of blacks in Denver to send their children to neighborhood schools.

Ron Edmonds, who would have expressed a similar perspective, was not allowed to testify in the Crawford case in the 70's by the pro-desegregation school board members. No such resistance appears forthcoming to bolster the desegregationist advocacy of the NAACP in the 80's. The Ghost of Desegregation Past can be seen shaking his head in grief, as Gordon Allport and his "contact theory" are ignored in the arguments offered and heeded by educational policy makers.

Conclusion

Awakening from our sleep, we have learned much from our friendly spirits: the road ahead for desegregation remains difficult. Its impetus, techniques, and benefits all have been called into question. But the Ghost of Desegregation Future has also shown us ways that the cause of educational equity may be served in the future--through technology and an emphasis on educational quality the work ahead is to guarantee the disadvantaged access to the resources and opportunities our educational system can provide.

The struggle will require new rhetoric, new goals, new solutions but the stakes remain high--the future welfare of our citizenry.

FOOTNOTES

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